

King of the Underworld by RJ Kane

Chapter 491

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Sephie

We continued our discussion over dinner, but it finally changed to somewhat lighter subjects. Andrei finally asked Stephen, “so how much are you still hanging out with Keith?”

Stephen seemed surprised by the question. “Not that much, honestly. I’m always with you guys now. I kind of don’t have time. Why?”

“He still very much pines for you,” I said, smiling at him. “We noticed it when we were checking everyone out last night.”

“Oh,” he said, almost shyly.

“I don’t want to embarrass you about it. We just thought you should know that he’s still carrying that torch for you,” I said.

“You’ve changed since you discovered your gift, Stephen. You have a quiet confidence you that’s very noticeable now. I’m sure he finds that attractive,” Adrik said.

“I do?” he asked.

“You do.” Adrik said.

“You’ve always been hilarious, but you kept it hidden away. You’re letting everyone see it, as well as your intelligence now. It’s no surprise he’s still wildly attracted to you,” I said.

“Wildly attracted’ is putting it mildly,” Andrei said, smirking at Stephen.

“Huh. I had not noticed,” he said.

“How could you? You’re always with us. Getting c|*ck-blocked,” Ivan said, laughing. I used another round of laughter from everyone.

I snapped my fingers, pointing at Ivan. “I told you I was holding you guys back from getting laid!” They could all feel my amusement at the situation, so none of them took me seriously. It did remind me, however, to ask Viktor about Ilya. “Have you talked to Ilya? Did he call Jessica after the fundraiser?” I asked him.

His deep laugh filled the kitchen. “He did. They’ve already gone on at least one date

“You guys are going to have to cycle through to Vitaliy’s team if you ever want to get hid,” I said. “We’ll come up with an exchange program. It’ll work out smashingly well.”

Once the laughter died down, Stephen said, “Seph, you’re not keeping us from anything. Stop thinking that. We choose to hang out up here over doing other stuff.”

“You keep saying that. I still don’t entirely believe it, but I love you for saying it anyway,” I said.

“I mean, our dinner conversations alone are more interesting than anyone else I’ve ever dated,” Stephen said.

“Now I know you’re lying. You can’t tell me we have better dinner conversations than Vlad, I mean, the ambience of his dinners alone wins everything. Who doesn’t want impaled boyars around the feast table?” I said.

Stephen laughed loudly. “I rest my case,” he said.

Viktor chuckled. “Vitaliy asked Ilya about Vlad.”

-Shut up.”

“He did. Ilya said he’d never met him, but he knew he was a friend of Stephen’s,” Viktor said, causing all of us to laugh even harder.

“Did he believe him?” Ivan asked.

“Ilya thinks he was mostly satisfied with the answer, but just the fact that he asked him about Vlad means he’s curious about this weird character we keep referencing.” Viktor said.

“We should just pay someone to pretend to be Vlad. Make him into a real person for Vitaliy,” Misha said.

“Give him a pet red panda while we’re at it,” Adrik said.

“You have the money. You can make this dream a reality.” I said.

As everyone sat around the kitchen, laughing uncontrollably at the absurdity we’d created for ourselves, I couldn’t help but love every single one of them a little bit more. They were so much fun. The joy that they brought me on a daily basis was something I never would’ve thought possible when I first met them all.

“I love you all so much right now,” I said, wiping the tears from my eyes from laughing so hard.

Stephen got up and walked to me, sliding his arm around my shoulders. “See why I want to hang out with you guys and not anyone else now?” he said, kissing the top of my head. I grabbed his arm, keeping him with me for a few moments.

As we calmed down, the conversation turned back to more serious matters. “We heard from the mayor about Dr. Moretti. Eric is ready to charge him for creating brawn. He won’t be charged for any of his back-room procedures as of now, because no one can remember him, but Eric feels certain that he can make the charges stick for the brawn and he’ll go away for a very long time,” Viktor said.

I felt Stephen’s anger slowly rising as the doctor’s name was mentioned. His hold on my shoulders tightened slightly as well.

“Surely there’s a way to make him pay for all those procedures he did, too?” he said, almost through gritted teeth.

“Because nobody but Sephie can remember him, there’s no proof. I’m not making her testify against him, either,” Adrik said.

Stephen’s anger continued to rise, at the injustice of it all. I knew what was about to happen, but Stephen was so outwardly calm that no one else had caught on just yet. “What does Eric think the sentence will be if he’s found guilty for the brawn?” asked.

“15 to 25, I think he said?” Viktor said.

That was the push Stephen needed to lose control of his anger. He stepped back from me, putting his hands in his pockets. He knew he was losing control and was trying his best to not let it happen. As soon as he stepped back from me, everyone else figured out what was happening. They all went on high alert, but stayed where they were.

I turned to Stephen, telling him to let go. “You’re going to have to go completely nuclear for it to happen, Stephen. I can show you how to control it, but I have a feeling you won’t need me,” I said.

We watched as his breathing rate increased slightly; his cheeks flushed. He had been looking at the floor, but he looked up at me as I was talking to him. His eyes were normally hazel, but right now, they were almost black. I could feel his anger, but I could feel him trying to contain it. Knowing how independent he liked to be, I waited to see if he could master it on his own before helping him.

It took him a few more moments, but he eventually began to calm himself down and his eyes returned to their normal hazel color. Adrik had been watching him the entire time, studying him as well as his demon. “Your demon is colder than normal, top. Just like you. Even though your anger burns just as hot as ours, it comes from ice,” Adrik said.

Ivan chuckled. “That makes no sense and yet, it makes perfect sense.”

“I think it needs to be that way. Stephen is the closest to you when it comes to sending people to Hell, if you will. He just sends them to their own darkness instead. He needs to be able to withstand the cold that comes with that,” I said, looking at Ark. “I do, however, think everyone needs contacts now, though,” I said as I got up to give Stephen a hug. His vampiric vice-grip held me tightly. I could feel he was happy about this finally happening to him. I could also feel he was proud of himself for doing it on his own.

“I’m proud of you, too. I knew you could figure it out without me,” I said silently to him. Since I was already touching him, he got the message right away. He didn’t say a word, he just held me tighter for a moment longer.